Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:

2018 AP® Music Theory Free-Response Questions

Number of Readers 107

Music Theory

- Number of Students Scored 19,018
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	4,303	22.6
4	3,557	18.7
3	4,658	24.5
2	4,259	22.4
1	2,241	11.8

- Global Mean 3.18

Music Theory Aural Subscore

- Number of Students Scored 19,018
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	4,319	22.7
4	3,684	19.4
3	4,383	23.0
2	4,435	23.3
1	2,197	11.6

- Global Mean 3.18

Music Theory Nonaural Subscore

- Number of Students Scored 19,018
- Score Distribution

Exam Score	N	%At
5	4,415	23.2
4	3,543	18.6
3	4,609	24.2
2	4,169	21.9
1	2,282	12.0

- Global Mean 3.19

The following comments on the 2018 free-response questions for AP® Music Theory were written by the Chief Reader, Rebecca Jemian, University of Louisville. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

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Question #1

Task: Melodic Dictation **Topic:** Major/Bass/Simple meter
Max. Points: 9 **Mean Score:** 3.93

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- hear a four-measure major-key melody in simple meter and notate the melody;
- hear and notate scalar patterns;
- hear and notate an ascending arpeggiated tonic triad;
- hear and notate the dotted rhythm in the third measure of the melody;
- hear and notate melodic patterns containing stepwise motion and melodic skips in the tonic triad;
- hear and notate an idiomatic melodic cadence; and
- hear and notate pitches correctly in bass clef.

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate ability of converting a heard melody into music notation;
- understanding of the topics (major scale, bass clef, simple meter) through correct notation; and
- limited difficulty with pitch and rhythm as demonstrated by common errors of notation.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Confusing skips vs. steps	• Ability to hear and notate correctly skips in the tonic chord vs. scalar motion
• Inability to distinguish/notate rhythms at the beat level and division level, including the dotted note.	• Ability to distinguish beat and division level rhythmic values, including dotted rhythms, and notate rhythmic values correctly

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Practice aural skills daily.
- Teach students to listen to and remember the melody before notating on the page.
- Expose students to a wide variety of melodies in major and minor, various meters, and differing tempi.
- Do more sight singing. Focus on developing scale degree awareness, so that students are not measuring leaps as intervals devoid of a tonal context.
- Emphasize that melodic skips have a harmonic basis (are members of a functional chord), in this case the tonic triad.
- Do not ignore rhythm: Teach students a vocabulary of typical rhythmic patterns in both simple and compound meters.
- Stress proper notation, including correct use of stems, beams, accidentals, dots, etc. Constantly reinforce this until clear notation is a habit. Students may lose points because of illegible notation.

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- Discuss question strategy with students; tell them that they can expect straightforward rhythms, a range of approximately one octave, and a likely ending on tonic on a strong beat. Caution students that even if they are unsure about some of the durations, they should not leave noteheads without rhythmic values indicated.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice melodic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Sight-Singing: Your Key to Success in Melodic Dictation*

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Question #2

Task: Melodic Dictation **Topic:** Minor/Treble/Compound meter
Max. Points: 9 **Mean Score:** 3.60

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- hear a four-measure minor-key melody in compound meter and notate the melody;
- hear and notate ascending and descending scalar patterns in the minor mode;
- hear and notate a descending arpeggiated dominant triad;
- hear and notate the sixteenth notes in measure 2, and the dotted rhythm in measure 3 of the melody;
- hear and notate melodic patterns containing stepwise motion and melodic skips;
- hear and notate a chromatic lower neighbor tone in measure 3 of the melody;
- hear and notate an idiomatic melodic cadence; and
- hear and notate pitches correctly in treble clef.

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- limited ability of converting a heard melody into music notation;
- incomplete understanding of minor scale, treble clef, and compound meter, as indicated by problematic notation;
- marked difficulty with rhythm, as demonstrated by errors of notating common beat patterns used in compound meters;
- limited proficiency with minor keys, shown by errors in notating melodic minor patterns;
- Limited proficiency in understanding chromatic alterations that are required in melodic minor; and,
- Limited proficiency in hearing chromatic alterations to the melody, such as the lower chromatic neighbor tone in measure 3.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Inability to hear/notate rhythmic patterns in compound meters	• Ability to hear and correctly notate patterns in compound meters
• Lack of familiarity with melodic minor	• Proficiency in writing in melodic minor, including all chromatic alterations
• Inability to hear skips vs. steps	• Ability to correctly recognize and notate skips by realizing functional scale degrees and harmonic implications

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Teach students to listen to and remember the melody before notating on the page.
- Expose students to a wide variety of melodies in major and minor, various meters, and differing tempi.

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- Do more sight singing. Focus on developing scale degree awareness, so that students are not measuring leaps as intervals devoid of a tonal context.
- Do not ignore rhythm: Teach students a vocabulary of typical rhythmic patterns in the basic meters.
- Stress proper notation, including correct use of stems, beams, dots, accidentals, etc. Constantly reinforce this until clear notation is a habit. Students may lose points because of illegible notation. Remind students that accidentals carry through the measure.
- Discuss question strategy with students; tell them that they can expect straightforward rhythms, a range of approximately one octave, and a likely ending on tonic on a strong beat. Caution students that even if they are unsure about some of the durations, they should not leave noteheads without rhythmic values indicated.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice melodic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Sight-Singing: Your Key to Success in Melodic Dictation*

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Question #3

Task: Harmonic Dictation **Topic:** Major mode/inverted triads
Max. Points: 24 **Mean Score:** 11.99

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- hear a four-part progression in a major key and notate the outer voices;
- provide the correct Roman numeral analysis of the chords;
- demonstrate a knowledge of common chord progressions, including deceptive (V–vi) motion, and ii^{6}–V–I;
- hear and notate triads and a seventh chord in root position and in inversions; and
- hear, notate, and analyze an authentic cadence.

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate understanding of diatonic major mode, triads in root position and inversion, seventh chords, and notating the soprano and bass voices, as demonstrated by use of music notation; and
- somedifficulties in precisely identifying diatonic chords, as shown in the Roman and Arabic numerals below the staff in the student responses.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Inability to hear correct chord inversions	• Ability to hear and notate correct chord inversions
• Confusing ii^{6} with IV at the cadence	• Ability to discriminate between ii^{6} and IV at the cadence
• Inability to infer correct chord from bass and soprano pitches	• Ability to infer correct chord and inversion from correct bass and soprano

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Teach students to identify cadence types and to work backwards from the ends of phrases.
- Encourage students to check that their bass and soprano lines match their Roman numeral analysis.
- Emphasize the distinctive sounds of triads versus seventh chords.
- Practice hearing and notating inverted triads and seventh chords.
- Practice two-part dictation when given a four-part aural prompt.
- Teach common chord progressions and inversions.

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What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice harmonic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Techniques for Teaching Harmonic Dictation* (p. 20)

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Question #4

Task: Harmonic Dictation **Topic:** Minor mode/secondary chord
Max. Points: 24 **Mean Score:** 7.84

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- hear a four-part progression in a minor key and notate the outer voices;
- alter scale degrees four and seven in a minor key;
- hear and notate the chordal seventh in the bass ($\text{V}\,^{4}_{2}$) and soprano ($\text{V}\,^{6}_{5}/\text{V}$) voice;
- hear and notate triads and seventh chords in root position and in inversion;
- hear and notate the secondary dominant chord and provide an appropriate Roman numeral analysis;
- demonstrate a knowledge of common chord progressions;
- provide the correct Roman numeral analysis of the chords; and
- hear, notate, and analyze a half cadence involving a secondary dominant.

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- limited understanding of minor mode progressions, including one secondary chord, as revealed by pitch notation and chord identification;
- fair understanding of outer voice motion, as demonstrated by use of music notation; and
- limited understanding of chord progressions presented in performed music, as reflected in notation of Roman and Arabic numerals below the staff.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Inability to distinguish chord quality and inversions in minor	• Ability to differentiate chord quality and inversions in minor based on outer voices
• Difficulty hearing and notating the secondary dominant and its inversion	• Ability to identify and notate the secondary dominant in correct inversion
• Inability to identify the half cadence in minor	• Ability to identify and notate the half cadence
• Failure to hear/notate the leading tone	• Ability to notate the raised leading tone

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Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Teach students to identify cadence types and to work backwards from the ends of phrases.
- Encourage students to check that their bass and soprano lines match their Roman numeral analysis.
- Emphasize the distinctive sounds of triads versus seventh chords in minor keys.
- Practice hearing and notating inverted chords in minor.
- Practice two-part dictation when given a four-part aural prompt.
- Teach common chord progressions and inversions in minor keys.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice harmonic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Techniques for Teaching Harmonic Dictation* (p. 20)

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Question #5

Task: Part writing
Topic: Figured Bass
Max. Points: 25
Mean Score: 16.10

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- realize a figured bass progression in Common Practice style in four voices;
- employ smooth voice-leading procedures;
- demonstrate understanding of diatonic harmony, including chord spelling, spacing, doubling, and voice leading in a four-part texture;
- analyze chords using Roman numerals;
- spell chords in a minor key, including raising the leading tone in the dominant chord;
- notate a Phrygian (iv–V) half cadence;
- correctly realize inverted triads and seventh chords utilizing all chord members; and
- correctly employ a voice exchange between and i and i6 (use of the voice exchange is optional).

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate understanding of figured bass realization, as shown by the number of correctly spelled chords and correct Roman numeral analyses;
- moderate abilities in employing smooth voice leading procedures, as shown throughout the progression; and
- fair abilities to write a Phrygian half cadence, as demonstrated in the last measure.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Misspelled chords (misspellings result in zero points for voice leading)	• Chords spelled correctly in correct inversions
• Voice-leading errors, including parallel octaves and fifths	• Understanding of contrary motion to avoid parallel perfect intervals
• Overlapped voices	• Understanding of chord spacing; keeping each voice in its own register
• Awkward doublings, such as leading tones and chordal sevenths	• Understanding that leading tones and sevenths are active tones, not to be doubled
• writing and resolving the ii$^{o\,6}_{5}$ chord	• Ability to write and resolve the ii$^{o\,6}_{5}$, including resolving the chordal seventh down

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Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Coach students on how to avoid over-complicating the required tasks.
- Practice writing clear, unambiguous music notation by hand.
- Drill chord spelling and emphasize to students that chord spelling errors result in a 5-point deduction.
- Encourage students to think about voice leading before working on vertical realization.
- Teach students to use stepwise motion and to keep the common tone whenever possible. (Think like a singer.)
- Review the meanings of the figures, giving special attention to identification of chordal roots.
- Emphasize that figured bass is not the same thing as inversion symbols.
- Practice writing iv–V progressions in minor keys, especially the Phrygian cadence (iv–V).
- Practice writing the ii$^{\circ}{}_{5}^{6}$ chord in minor, emphasizing the downward resolution of the chordal seventh.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice harmonic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Thinking Horizontally: Learning Part Writing and Figured Bass Through Analysis* (p. 140)

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Question #6

Task: Part writing
Topic: Roman numerals
Max. Points: 18
Mean Score: 9.77

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- write a four-part chord progression from Roman numerals;
- demonstrate an understanding of chord spelling, and spacing and doubling of voices;
- demonstrate an understanding of chord inversions;
- demonstrate command of voice-leading procedures;
- demonstrate knowledge of secondary dominant chords;
- demonstrate an understanding of tendency tones and their resolutions; and
- demonstrate knowledge of how to approach chordal dissonances.

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- proficient understanding of diatonic Roman numerals, as demonstrated by the spelling of chords;
- limited abilities at spelling secondary dominant seventh chords, as shown by the frequent errors in the spelling of this chord; and
- insufficient understanding of voice leading procedures, as demonstrated by the limited number of proficient responses.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Incorrectly spelled chords, especially the secondary dominant	• Understanding of chord spelling, including correct spelling of the secondary dominant chord
• Voice leading errors; especially parallel fifths and octaves, and parallel fifths and octaves by contrary motion	• Avoiding parallel perfect intervals by employing correct voice leading procedures
• Chord spacing	• Realizing that contiguous voices should be within an octave

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Encourage students to use smooth voice leading, and especially to avoid large leaps.
- Encourage students to use contrary motion in the outer voices.
- Encourage students to write the outer voices first and to fill in the inner voices as a pair, after the outer voices have been carefully checked.
- Avoid overemphasis of doubling the root, because this is not always appropriate (especially when chords are inverted).

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- Think carefully about the key signature, about whether a chord should need any accidentals, and, if so, which specific accidentals are needed.
- Be careful not to confuse the leading tone (scale degree seven) with the chordal seventh.
- Drill inversions and their figures, carefully distinguishing triads from seventh chords. Students should be aware that they will not receive any points for a chord if the inversion is incorrect or if a seventh is added or omitted (i.e., does not match the analysis provided).
- Focus on proper treatment of dissonance, especially the approach to and resolution of the chordal seventh. Students should be aware that the seventh must resolve in the same voice (not just the same register).
- Emphasize the importance of resolving leading tones, particularly in outer voices.
- Consider identifying tendency tones with a special symbol (e.g., circling them or writing arrows from them) to highlight their importance and their resolutions.
- Advise students not to add embellishing tones unless specifically required by the figures.
- Address the strategic use of incomplete chords; often voice leading is substantially improved when the fifth is omitted from a root-position chord.
- Discuss the appropriate use of charts, diagrams, and other memory aids. Writing charts and diagrams often seems unhelpful for this particular question: it takes time, the information is not always relevant to the question, and the layout sometimes seems to cause mistakes because the student confuses the layout of the diagram with the actual music notation.
- Address issues of notation, particularly the proper way to write noteheads and accidentals (including the placement of accidentals on the left side of the notehead rather than the right), and how to portray doubling.
- When discussing the use of accidentals, use the terms “raise” and “lower” rather than “sharp” and “flat” because sometimes a natural (rather than a sharp or flat) is needed.
- Practice writing common cadences, so that typical voice-leading combinations become familiar.
- Students who can’t answer the entire question should be encouraged to skip unfamiliar portions and fill in the chords that they know.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice harmonic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Thinking Horizontally: Learning Part Writing and Figured Bass Through Analysis* (p. 140)

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Question #7

Task: Harmonization of a Melody
Topic: Bass line/Roman numerals
Max. Points: 9
Mean Score: 4.75

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- compose a bass line following the rules of eighteenth-century counterpoint;
- write standard authentic and half cadences;
- harmonize a melody with an appropriate chord progression;
- use conventional harmonic patterns;
- recognize and correctly use a secondary dominant chord;
- correctly harmonize a chromatically-altered scale degree four in an ascending step-wise melody;
- use six-four chords according to conventional common practice;
- treat the leading tone correctly, concerning both chord voicing and voice leading; and
- use embellishments correctly in a two-part framework.

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate understanding of adding a bass line and Roman numeral analysis to a melody, as shown by the number of responses that earned a middle score; and
- fair understanding of cadences, as demonstrated by proper use of harmonic patterns and bass lines at the ends of phrase.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Bass line does not harmonize with soprano; dissonant clashes	• Bass line harmonizes with soprano in standard chord progression
• Unresolved leading tones and/or chordal sevenths	• Leading tones and chordal sevenths resolve correctly
• Poor chords progressions (V–IV, ii-I, etc.), or no progression (blank)	• Standard chord progressions
• Parallel octaves and/or fifths	• Good use of contrary motion to avoid parallel perfect intervals
• Weak or incorrectly written cadences	• Good cadences, recognition of half vs. authentic cadences; Perfect Authentic Cadence (PAC) at the end
• Failure to recognize the implied secondary dominant	• Realizing that the chromatic pitch represents a secondary dominant

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Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Discourage overuse of six-four chords, except for the cadential six-four if appropriate at a cadence. Remind students that passing and pedal six-four chords must occur on weak beats.
- Encourage the use of root position chords at cadences.
- Discourage the use of the root position vii^{o6} chord.
- Teach students to prepare and resolve chordal sevenths properly.
- Teach students that ii♯ is not proper notation for a secondary dominant chord.
- Remind students that unaccented passing tones are the only appropriate embellishments for this exercise, and that the given melody will not include accented non-harmonic tones.
- Encourage students to use the first phrase as a guide for consistency throughout the question.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice harmonic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Interpreting and Harmonizing Melodies: Some Formulas for Success* (p. 32)

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Question #SS1 **Task:** Sight Singing **Topic:** Major/Bass/Simple meter

Max. Points: 9 **Mean Score:** 5.43

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- sight read and sing a melody in major mode;
- sing in simple duple meter;
- perform common rhythmic patterns;
- perform a dotted rhythm;
- sing skips and stepwise motion in both ascending and descending directions;
- sing a melody with a vocal range of a ninth;
- perform chordal skips within the tonic and dominant triads;
- establish and maintain a steady tempo;
- establish and retain a sense of tonic; and
- read in bass clef.

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- moderate effectiveness at converting notated music to performed music by singing a major mode melody in the bass clef using simple meter; and
- good proficiency of performing common rhythmic patterns, demonstrated by success singing the dotted-quarter-eighth note pattern.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Singing steps instead of skips, and vice-versa	• Differentiating skips and steps, especially skips in the tonic triad
• Out of tune intervals; whole steps instead of half steps	• Realizing the sound of scale degrees, the major scale, and skips in the tonic and dominant triads
• Incorrect rhythms; augmentations or diminutions	• Singing correct rhythms

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Sight sing regularly in class.
- Practice reading and performing in different clefs.
- Encourage students not to hum, but to sing with an initial consonant sound; humming obscures accurate pitch.
- Encourage students to sing strongly so they can be heard.
- Encourage students to sing the tonic triad to establish the key/tonic.
- Encourage students to select a starting pitch that is comfortable for their individual range.

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- Encourage students to ghost-finger along, as if playing their instruments, while singing.
- Encourage students to sing using contour—not just rhythm on the tonic pitch—if they struggle greatly with pitch.
- Encourage students to keep going even if they make a mistake.
- Teach students how to regain their place in a melody, such as finding the high *do* in measure 3.
- Practice common rhythmic patterns in various meters.
- Emphasize holding notes for their full value.
- Allow students to use a neutral syllable if, by March, they are struggling with solfège or numbers.
- Encourage students to analyze the mode of the melody they are performing.
- Encourage students to sing aloud during the 1-minute-15-second practice time.
- Encourage students to practice rhythm first during the 1-minute-15-second practice time.
- Let students know that it is acceptable to write on the test during the practice period.
- Let students know that it is acceptable to conduct while they practice so that they establish a steady tempo.
- Give practice AP Music Theory Exams, including the free examples posted on AP Central.
- Simulate the recording scenario for students.
- AP Music Theory teachers need to work with their administrations to establish an appropriate testing environment for the sight singing questions. Students need to be sonically isolated from each other, so that they do not hear each other's practice and performance.
- Train proctors prior to the day of the exam.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice harmonic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Teaching Sight Singing* and *Sight Singing: A Strategy for the Non-Singer and the Underprepared Student* (p. 16)

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Question #SS2

Task: Sight Singing
Topic: Minor/Treble/Compound meter
Max. Points: 9
Mean Score: 3.59

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question assessed students' ability to:

- sight read and sing a melody in melodic minor;
- sing in compound duple meter;
- perform common rhythmic patterns in compound meter;
- perform a dotted rhythm;
- sing skips and stepwise motion in both ascending and descending directions;
- sing a melody with a vocal range of an octave;
- perform chordal skips within the tonic, supertonic, and dominant triads;
- sing chromatic neighbor tones;
- establish and maintain a steady tempo;
- establish and retain a sense of tonic; and
- read treble clef.

How well did the response address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student responses demonstrated:

- limited understanding of minor mode, treble clef, and compound meter, as demonstrated by the number of mediocre responses;
- moderate success at singing with stepwise motion and recognizing common rhythm patterns in compound meter; and
- deficient understanding of advanced tonality, shown by incorrect performance of the chromatic embellishing tones and the descending supertonic triad.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Singing the melody in major instead of minor	• Good understanding of the sound of melodic minor
• Difficulty singing the descending supertonic arpeggio	• Could sing the descending arpeggio
• Difficulties with compound meter rhythms, including dotted rhythms and sixteenths	• Could recognize and execute the rhythms correctly

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer to teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Train aural skills daily.
- Start singing early in the year; sing often in major and minor modes, in simple and compound meters, using various clefs and ranges.

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- Coach students on where to place a melody in a range of the voice that is both comfortable and executable.
- Teach and use a system of singing, such as solfège, numbers, etc. Emphasize the relationship of scale degrees in the system.
- Emphasize the difference between major and minor scales and triads.
- Practice singing in all forms of minor, including descending scalar and intervallic patterns.
- Look at a melody as being centered on a tonic triad.
- Student vocalization patterns for establishing tonic should help students realize pitches in relation to tonality.
- Practice melodies that contain altered tones, especially chromatic neighbor tones.
- Practice harmonic patterns, such as outlining tonic, dominant, dominant seventh, supertonic, subdominant, and other chords in ascending and descending arpeggios.
- Encourage students to articulate each note (e.g., "ta ta" instead of a slurred response).
- Singing letter names, scale degree numbers, or solfège, without correct pitch and rhythm doesn't earn credit.
- Practice executing rhythm patterns, including dotted rhythms.
- Emphasize rhythmic integrity; the duration of the final note is important.
- Teach students to choose an appropriate tempo for singing. The tempo of this exercise was marked *Moderato*. Although points were not deducted for an incorrect tempo set at the start of the exercise, students tended to fare worse if they chose to perform at a painstakingly slow tempo OR at a very fast tempo.
- Offer strategies for the sight singing process: use of the practice time; identification of clef, key signature, range, and time signature; identification of tricky spots; recognition of basic rhythm and melodic patterns.
- Simulate the testing experience. Let students practice with the recording technology in a situation that replicates where the proctor and equipment will be during testing.
- Encourage students to sing freely with full voice during the practice and performance portions of the exam.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Teachers can use released exam questions with audio prompts and scoring guidelines to practice harmonic dictation with their students. Please visit the AP Music Theory exam page on AP Central to access these resources.

Also see: *Teaching Sight Singing* and *Sight Singing: A Strategy for the Non-Singer and the Underprepared Student* (p. 16)

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